

REMARKS

1. This Request for Continued Examination (RCE) is proper, since:
 - a) Applicants have authorized payment of the appropriate RCE fee, FY 2005 Fee Schedule;
 - b) this RCE is being submitted prior to payment of the issue fee, 37 CFR § 1.114 (a)(1);
 - c) a Notice of Allowance has closed prosecution in the application, 37 CFR § 1.114 (b); and
 - d) an IDS is a proper RCE submission, 37 CFR § 1.114 (c).
2. Prior to payment of the issue fee, Applicants noticed that references submitted to the Patent Office during prosecution have apparently not been made of record. In particular:
 - a) Applicants submitted an IDS Form PTO/SB/08B on June 1, 1999, together with a copy of four (4) non-patent references. Although PAIR reflects receipt of the IDS, Applicants do not have a copy of the IDS with the Examiner's initials indicating that the references have been considered; and
 - b) Applicants submitted a Supplemental IDS including Form PTO /SB/08A on January 16, 2004, together with copies of nine (9) U.S. patents. PAIR does not seem to reflect receipt of the Supplemental IDS. Moreover, Applicants do not have a copy of the Supplemental IDS with the Examiner's initials indicating that the references have been considered.

Applicants have enclosed copies of the above filings, together with evidence that both IDS's were previously submitted.
3. Applicants submitted a Petition for Withdrawal From Issue under 37 CFR § 1.313 on November 4, 2004 to remedy the PTO error indicated above. It appears that petition will be rendered ineffective tomorrow, December 21, 2004, due to inaction by the Patent Office.
4. Applicants hereby request that the Patent Office now consider the IDS's previously submitted on June 1, 1999 and January 16, 2004. In the alternative, Applicants request the Patent Office to consider the very same references listed on the IDS filed as a submission with this RCE.
5. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any appropriate fees under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16, 1.17, and 1.21 that may be required by this paper, and to credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-1283.

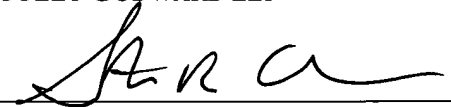
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Enclosures
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Respectfully submitted,
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By:



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